



**Ciall agus neart - Reason and Strength**

January 22, 2012

TO: Dennis Hawkins, City Clerk  
FROM: Martha O'Connell *M. O'Connell*  
RE: Agenda Template for Boards and Commissions – **Open Forum Placement**

As you finalize your recommendations on an agenda template for City Boards and Commissions, please consider the following. **It is critical that the placement of Open Forum be at the beginning of the meetings of Boards and Commissions. This is an issue for those with disabilities and/or for those who use public transportation.**

The Human Rights Commission voted on May 21, 2009 to endorse and utilize this concept, pointing out “members of the public who take public transportation would feel safer leaving the meeting sooner rather than later” and that those who participate in Open Forum “do not take a significant amount of time.”

**Other Commissions, such as the Senior Citizens Commission, the Disability Commission, and the Youth Commission, follow this sensitive and enlightened agenda placement.**

Asking a citizen to wait for hours to give their Open Forum input at the end of a night meeting and then walk in the dark to a potentially unsafe location is something that can be easily avoided by placing Open Forum at the beginning of the meeting. In the cold and rain of winter, the situation is even worse. I join with those who have addressed this need for day meetings during your Public Hearing on January 18, 2012. I understand that some night meetings are necessary. All I reasonably advocate is that folks be given the opportunity to leave “sooner rather than later” and have a safer trip home.

Cc: Mayor and Council  
Chair Senior, Youth, Human Rights and Disability Commissions